

Old Orchard Beach Conservation Commission Minutes
Monday, March 14, 2022 7:00 PM
Town Hall

Members present: Kimbark Smith, Barry Jackman, Irv Paradis, Charlie Backus, Cynthia Nye
Guests: Larry Mead, Missy Mans, 2 members of community

1. Memorial Park Committee Update Larry Mead
Proposed \$500,000 LAWCON Update Application

- Larry presented a slide show including a history of Memorial Park and proposed improvements: Install a new meandering accessible approach and new format for the Memory Knoll; replace stone dust sidewalks with concrete; replace lighting; replace gazebo with a replica of Ocean Park's gazebo.
- LAWCON state administered July 1 deadline; they are requesting support from ConCom and the town.
- Town Council has appropriated \$250,000.

Vote: Con Com voted to approve the application: Kimbark moved, Barry seconded, Charlie and Irv voted yes; Cynthia abstained. (Passed 4-0-1)

2. Piping Plovers - Missy Mans

She spent 2020 summer working with Roger Stevens; she had previously submitted observations and photos to Audubon; when Roger passed, Missy became the liaison to Audubon for monitoring piping plovers on OOB. She would like to have more information about the birds provided as people enter the beach; signs have to be in stable sand close to the dunes, not down on the beach. Current signage is inconsistent.

The birds will begin arriving in 1-2 weeks. People confuse sandpipers and piping plovers. Sandpipers wintered over this year. Piping plover nests are just scrapes in the sand. Missy walks daily looking for their tracks in the sand and signs of a nest. Audubon puts up stakes and twine to mark areas. They may put up an enclosure to protect eggs from predators. Parents and later chicks leave the eggs to feed, up to a mile away.

Challenges: Chicks don't fly for 30-35 days. Children pick up eggs and chicks. Parents will care for returned chicks. Education is the best way to help them survive. Chicks get eaten by seagulls and crows; dead chicks are a mystery. Foxes predate nests. Dogs love to sniff in the dune grass, disturbing chicks and sometimes causing adults to abandon nests. Sometimes people take down the fencing Audubon puts up. It's becoming more common to see dogs loose in the dunes, and people leaving dog poop in the dunes and sand.

Volunteers help monitor. Last year 10 identified nests (some were re-nestings, likely because something disturbed the nest). Last chick (injured) was taken off the beach the day before Labor Day.

Dogs -some people are tuned in, asking about the birds. Some people don't know or don't want to control their dogs.

Irv asked about fencing off the dunes, but the birds nest out in the sand. Also high tides are pushing sand up into the dunes.

May 15 to Labor Day - no dogs 9-5, dogs on a 12 ft leash after 5. From dusk to 9 am dogs may run loose, but shall be under Voice and Sight Control per the new Ordinance of 11-16-2021.

What would help?

- Additional signage: Consistent clear signage at every access - 36 access points - Dogs have to stay 100 feet from Audubon fencing
- Council supports getting new consistent signage
- Enforcement - uniformed personnel, fines, no personal fireworks at any time
- One page mailing to everyone
- Posting at rentals, airbnb
- Dogs on leash
- Make portions of the beach inaccessible to dogs?
- Statistics - how many dogs are out of control?
- Businesses - do guests know that they need to pick up poop?
- Poop getting worse & worse

Kimbark will schedule another meeting this month.

Adjourned 8:26 pm